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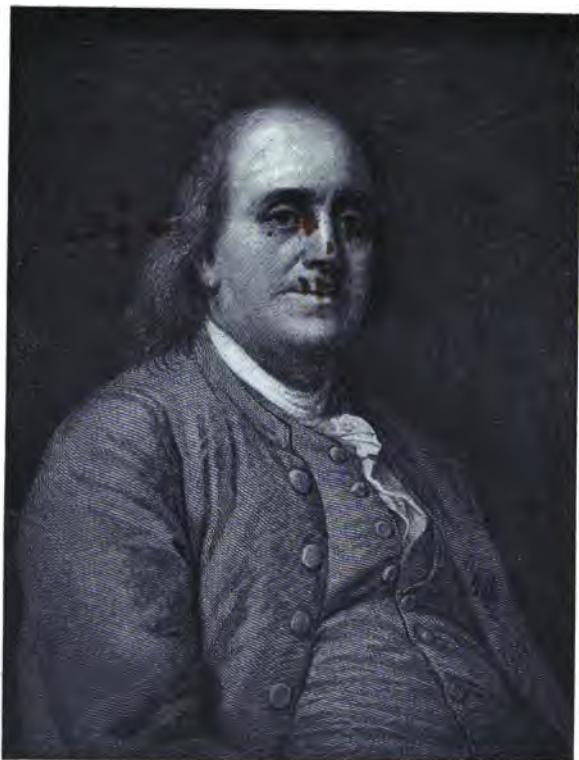


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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

1706-1790.

FROM THE PAINTING BY J. A. DUPLESSIS 1783.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND EDUCATION

HIS IDEAL OF LIFE
AND HIS SYSTEM OF EDUCATION FOR THE
REALIZATION OF THAT IDEAL

BY

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BOSTON, U.S.A.
D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS
1902

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By DAVID EXCELMONS CLOYD.

DEDICATED TO
DR. D. L. KIEHLE
WHO FIRST AWAKENED MY INTEREST
IN THE
HISTORY OF EDUCATION

PREFACE

I HAVE endeavored in this volume to give a simple presentation of Franklin's ideal of life, and the means whereby an individual might attain nearest to this ideal in his own life. I have conceded that there was a great gulf between the ideal Franklin and the real Franklin, and I have indicated that there are proofs of this fact in his writings, but I have touched lightly upon this topic because it was the ideal and not the real I was attempting to portray, believing as I do that it was this ideal which made Franklin the great and good man that he was, and that it still has power to lift up from poverty many another boy to eminence and virtue.

DAVID EXCELMONS CLOYD.

116 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK,

August, 1902.

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ABBREVIATIONS

P. L. R. means Philadelphia Library, Ridgeway Branch.

P. H. S. means Pennsylvania Historical Society.

S. means Jared Sparks.

B. means John Bigelow.

PART I

**FRANKLIN'S EDUCATIONAL
IDEAL**

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND EDUCATION

CHAPTER I



FRANKLIN'S EDUCATIONAL IDEAL

POSSIBLY no other practical man has given in his writings a fuller and clearer statement of what education should do for one than has Franklin. This is largely due to the fact that he was what is generally called a self-educated man. (And self-education with him was a definite, conscious means of realizing in himself an Ideal, which Ideal was a life of service, and broad enough to comprehend the whole of life.) To properly understand his attitude toward the school as an institution and toward the various subjects in the curriculum, as well as his views regarding methods of learning and instructing, one must see clearly the end, or aim, that Franklin would have the student reach.

The analysis of his thoughts of life as a whole shows clearly that he always had in mind

the effect in after life of each present act. An illustration of this is his comparison of life with a dramatic piece, which he said should not only run with regularity but should end handsomely; and for such an

← Aim of Life.

ending he began in middle life to cast about, believing that in such an enterprise God would give him success, if he undertook it with a sincere regard to His honor, the service of his gracious King, and the public good.¹ This carefully regulated life was to be one of service to mankind, to one's country, friends, and family; and the idea of such service, as true merit, should be often explained and impressed on the minds of youth.² Every word of this aim or purpose of life rings with altruistic utilitarianism. And a man who gave himself in this way was wise and good, and it was upon such that the strength of the state depended rather than upon riches and armies.³ From early youth till his death Franklin kept himself under the most rigid discipline and training that he might realize in himself this lofty ideal. He says in his auto-

¹ *To George Whitefield*, 1756. B. II. 466.

² *Proposals relating to the Education of the Youth of Pennsylvania*, 1749. B. I. 224.

³ *To Dr. Johnson*. B. II. 204.

biography¹ that (at the age of twenty-six he conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection.) In this plan we find his simple, practical theory of morality. He wished to live without committing any fault and to conquer all that natural inclination, custom, or company might lead him into. Knowing what was right and what was wrong he believed he could form the habit of doing the right, and in the self-denial that such a course necessitated he believed that he would find the greatest good and the highest satisfaction.² He believed that a man should seek happiness, but not as a Hedonist; the pleasures of sense were rather to be despised, because they tended to blight the higher life. He advocated rational pleasure and moral good, which were to be found in acts of kindness, friendship, generosity, and benevolence. For, said he, that kind of pleasure lasts to the end of one's being. It is preservative of mankind and produces real and universal happiness. But the self-denial necessary to such morality was not that of an ascetic. His argument regarding the

Theory of
Morality.

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 105.

² *Dialogue between Horatio and Philocles*, 1730. S. II. 46 ; B. I. 383.

essence of virtue is to show that there is virtue without self-denial.¹ Virtue is merit, and the saints in heaven who are free from temptation have the most perfect virtue. Hence, self-denial is only to be commended when it is applied in a good sense, in an act of service. This wholesome philosophy of life is found in most all of his important writings.

All the world, he says, seeks happiness, but by different methods. There are two principles that guide men in this pursuit — one passion, the other reason.² Passion often chooses evil, but

Two
Governing
Principles
in Life.

as an imaginary good, while reason chooses what is in reality good. The quality of one's happiness depends upon which prevails in the conflict between these two principles. Passions are concerned too much with earthly objects to give us composure and acquiescence of mind, while submission to the will of Providence, which is guidance by reason, gives true happiness and is the best guard against the evils which passions choose. A rational being finds a brighter satisfaction in the expectation of the things of the

¹ *Self-denial not the Essence of Virtue*, 1734. S. II. 63; B. I. 414.

² *True Happiness*. S. II. 70; B. I. 422.

next world than in the enjoyment of those of the present.

His method of self-discipline whereby he hoped to become virtuous and to realize this ideal of life was elaborate and comprehensive regarding the minutest acts. It showed clearly that he believed one becomes virtuous by practising the virtues — by acquiring the habit of doing right. Mere speculative conviction that it was to our interest to be completely virtuous was

Method of
attaining
Moral
Perfection.

(29)
→

not sufficient to keep us from slipping, but the contrary habits must be broken and good ones acquired before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. He made a list of thirteen virtues and annexed to each a precept which fully expressed the extent which he gave to its meaning.¹ In a little book which he always carried with him he allotted a page for each virtue, and each day he graded himself, concentrating his attention for a week at a time upon a single virtue. In his autobiography, written late in life, he says that he kept up this self-examination for years, and gave it up only with the press of business, though he always carried the little book with him. The

self-examined

¹ Sparks, *Autobiography of Franklin*, p. 106; B. I. 174.

extent to which he realized the moral perfection which he hoped that this scheme would give him, is told admirably in his own words.

"It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owes the constant felicity of his life down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. Whatever reverses may attend, the remainder is in the hand of Providence ; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation."¹

So strongly did he believe in the efficacy of this method, that he proposed writing a book, to be called, *The Art of Virtue*, in which he would show the manner and means of attaining virtue. He intended that this should be the greatest work of his life. The plan of it is given in a letter to Lord Kames,² written when Franklin was fifty years old. His thesis is: "Most people have naturally some virtues, but none have naturally all the virtues. To acquire those that are wanting and to secure what we acquire, as well as those we have naturally, is as properly an art as painting, navigation, or

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 114.

² *To Lord Kames*, 1760, 1761. B. III. 47, 152.

architecture." He repeatedly refers to this book in his correspondence, but left it unfinished at his death.

Intentionally he left out of this scheme every mark of any of the distinguishing tenets of religious sects, because he, believing so strongly in the utility and excellency of it, thought that he could thereby make it more serviceable to people of all religions. But it is by no means to be concluded that Franklin omitted religion from his ideal man. Though in early life a deist, he soon began to feel the inadequacy of such a belief in the dealings between man and man, and was convinced that truth, sincerity, and integrity were of the utmost importance to the felicity of life.¹ And while he never accepted, though he did not deny, the doctrine of Revelation nor of the divinity of Christ, yet he was religious in what he thought to be the most practical, wholesome, and ideal way — a religion without offence to any sect, but suggestive to all in its simplicity and saving power. In a letter to a friend a short time before his death, he gave his creed in the following simple and beautiful lines: —

Religion an
Element
of his Ideal.

"I believe in one God, the creator of the uni-

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 76.

verse. That He governs it by His providence. That He ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service rendered to Him is doing good to His other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this.”¹

These were the main principles of his religion—a religion which he believed would be a powerful regulator of our actions, give us peace and tranquillity within our minds, and render us benevolent, useful, and beneficial to others.²

The following instance is strong proof of his faith in the guiding hand of a divine Providence. It is his famous motion for prayers in the convention that framed the Constitution of the United States.³ In the deliberations of that body no agreement could be reached on most of the questions; the convention had sought models of government in ancient forms, but had found none suited to their needs. “Why not go now to the Father of Lights,” asked Franklin, “to illuminate our understanding? In the

¹ *To Ezra Stiles*, 1790. S. X. 422; B. X. 192.

² *Lecture on the Providence of God in the Government of the World*. B. VII. 489.

³ B. IX. 428; S. V. 153.

beginning of our conflict with Great Britain we offered up daily prayers to Him, and these were heard and answered." The longer he lived, he said, the more convincing proof he saw that God governs in the affairs of men. However, it must be admitted that, both in a theoretical sense and in its practical workings, his religion was very different from that of the orthodox sects of his day.¹ The utilitarian turn of his mind led him to attempt to adapt the *Book of Common Prayer* to the needs of the old, sick, and young who could not find it prudent or convenient to attend service. Though no practical use was ever made of this book, yet it helps us to see that his religious nature was always turned toward the people who were in need of service. ✓

With this view of his ideal man before us, we look to see to what extent Franklin realized it in his own life. A quotation from a letter to a friend,² when Franklin was in his seventy-eighth year, is a beautiful summary of his own conception of what his life had been. He had "enemies as an American," he said, "enemies as a minis- ✓

Ideal
realized in
himself.

¹ B. V. 274.

² To John Jay, 1784. S. X. 52; B. VIII. 425.

ter, but not as a man. No human being exists who can say, 'Benjamin Franklin has wronged me.' "

Duke de la Rochefoucauld, an eminent Frenchman, in a letter to Franklin,¹ characterized him as a "philosopher whose genius has thrown light upon physical and political science, has taught what liberty is, and how we may acquire and preserve it, who knows the value of friendship, who can judge himself with the same impartiality with which he can judge others."

Washington's conception of what Franklin had realized in himself is told in a letter to him.² "If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know that you have not lived in vain."

Morse, in his *Benjamin Franklin, an American Statesman*,³ says: "If we can imagine a circumference which shall express humanity, we can place within it no one man who will reach

¹ *To Franklin*, 1788. S. X. 354; B. X. 2.

² *Washington to Franklin*, 1789. S. X. 396; B. X. 148.

³ J. T. Morse, *Benjamin Franklin*, p. 420.

out to ~~approach it and to touch~~ it at so many points as will Franklin."

His great ambition was to benefit mankind, and every moment that could be taken from his public service was spent in devising something to promote the general welfare. He founded libraries, organized societies, started schools, wrote, gave counsel, money, inventions, — everything that his hand or brain could produce, — that humanity might be blessed. Possibly no one has ever lived who, relative to his own time of life, has ever done more than Franklin for mankind. Yet, there was a darker side to his life — some habits he had not succeeded in breaking, notwithstanding his high ideal and all his rigid self-discipline. He wrote some things that were not pure in thought, and violated some virtues which he considered so essential to a moral life. But this was not the Franklin that he wanted to be, and not the Franklin that lives to-day in the many institutions founded by him, or in accord with his ideals. And the criticisms made upon him by his enemies while he lived, and by some present students of his life, are certainly too severe in the light of the tremendous force for good that Franklin was in his own day and will continue to be till time is no more.

With this ideal and its partial realization in his own life, Franklin was severe and at times rather pessimistic in his estimate of people in general. His keen desire to improve their condition

**Estimate
of
Mankind.**

made him study them as to their nature, their tendency, and their possibilities, and he found much that was not good.¹ He says that he found more

pleasure in studying the inanimate works of nature than the animate or moral part, which disgusted him more and more. He found men

to be a sort of beings, very badly constructed, as they are generally more easily provoked than reconciled, more disposed to do mischief to each other than to make reparation, much more easily

deceived than undeceived, and having more pride and even pleasure in killing than in be-

getting one another. In an essay, *The Handsome and Deformed Leg*,² he divides the world into two parts, both of which start with equal health, wealth, and comforts of life; one

becomes happy, the other miserable. This is due to the different views they take of persons and things. All things, he says, have both a good and a bad side, but one class have formed

¹ *To Joseph Priestly*, 1782. S. IX. 225; B. VII. 464.

² *The Handsome and Deformed Leg*. S. II. 186; B. VI. 253.

the habit of being bad through the continuous imitation of the bad which they see in life about them. They have perverted their nature, which was originally good. His admonition to such was to change their habits, as otherwise no one could ever love them.

But regarding peoples' opinions, he was more charitable,¹ and was tolerant almost to a fault. An illustration of this fact is found in a letter to his son William, who had broken with his father because he had conceived that his duty to his king and regard for his country required it. In a letter replying to the son's request to renew the affectionate intercourse, Franklin says, "I ought not to blame you for differing in sentiment with me in public affairs, for our opinions are not in our own hands, they are formed and governed much by circumstances that are often as inexplicable as they are irresistible."

Tolerant of
Others'
Opinions.

Notwithstanding this adverse criticism Franklin loved humanity, believed in it, and trusted it.² He found a saving element in every character, an innate power, which, when directed by reason, would lead each soul into a happy life.

¹ *To William Franklin*, 17. S. X. 121; B. IX. 43.

² Poem on Ambition, *Almanac* 1758. P. L. R.

Every one at some time felt the impelling power of ambition, which, if Heaven directed, would make the individual both good and great. A wise ambition, through industry, awakens nature's powers and adds some new-born grace each day. These struggles are first for selfish ends, but nature inspires thoughts for others which manifest themselves as love for family and then for friends. If this friendship be cherished for mutual ends, then it ripens into charity, which is love for all mankind, the highest service to one's maker. This is the possibility which he saw in mankind, and he sought to lay hold on it and to help to make it easier for each individual to do something for himself, and at the same time to do something for his fellow-men. This problem was more largely an individual one with Franklin than it was with almost any one else who has written on education. This accounts mainly for the difference between the school system advocated by him and that of his illustrious contemporaries, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.

*
✂ His practical insight into human nature convinced him that most men were guided by utilitarian and material ends, and that they could

best be reached and controlled by an appeal to such motives. This accounts for the utilitarian philosophy in all of his moral and economic writings and especially in the prefaces, proverbs, and poems in *Poor Richard's Almanac*. He

Motives
that
govern
Mankind.

found men idle, and he told them in material terms the consequences of it; he saw them puffed up with pride, and he showed them its ruinous course; he saw them running into debt, and he pictured them as slaves to their creditors. He filled their minds with proverbs on industry, frugality, and prudence, to guide and impel them to make the proper use of their time, their strength, and their aspiration. These were the concrete statements of the principles which made up Franklin's ideal—a homely philosophy suited to the needs of the people of his time—of all time, though narrowly interpreted by some as materialistic utilitarianism.

The sayings of poor Richard after twenty-five years of promiscuous use were gathered together into Franklin's masterpiece, *Father Abraham's Speech*.¹ This little classic is an infallible guide to material success to a member of any class or profession. With such success

¹ *Father Abraham's Speech, Almanac 1758. P. L. R.; B. I. 441.*

Franklin believed and taught would come the higher or moral success which his ideal called for. Thus we have before us the ideal Franklin, and the real Franklin, and the world of humanity as he believed it to be — humanity as he loved it, trusted it, and gave his life for it. In the light of this we look with interest to see what were the means and methods advocated by him for the education of mankind. Bearing upon this point it is most necessary to sketch briefly his own education.

**Franklin's
Guide
to Material
Success.**

He entered a Boston grammar school at the age of eight, and in one year passed through two classes.¹ He had learned to read so early that he had no recollection of when he could not read. Before the end of the year he was taken from this school and put into a private school for writing and arithmetic, where, under a skilful master, he learned to write a good hand, but failed completely in arithmetic. At ten years of age he began work with his father in the business of tallow-chandler and soap-boiler and remained there until twelve years of age, when he was apprenticed to his brother to learn the

**How he
was
Educated.**

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, Chap. I.

printer's trade. In this apprenticeship he continued till he was seventeen years old. From his infancy, he says that he was passionately fond of reading, and spent all the money he could get for books. The books he read during these years of apprenticeship were his real teachers. The important ones were: Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Burton's *Historical Collections*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Defoe's *An Essay on Projects*, Cotton Mather's *An Essay to do Good*, Addison's *Spectator*, Cocker's *Arithmetic*, Seller & Sturny's *Navigation*, Locke's *Human Understanding*, the Port Royal *Art of Thinking*, Greenwood's *English Grammar*, Xenophon's *Memorable Things of Socrates*, Tryon on *Vegetable Diet*, Shaftesbury, Collins. He also says that his father often had some sensible friend or neighbor at the table to converse with and took care to have the conversation turn upon useful topics to improve the minds of his children, and in this way taught them what was good, and just, and prudent in the conduct of life. By conversing, disputing, arguing, and debating with another bookish lad he was led to inform himself on various topics, and by writing out his arguments to improve his style. At this time a volume of Addison's *Spectator*

fell into his hands and became at once his master and instructor in composition. He wrote poems and sketches for his brother's paper, and in this way gained some confidence in his ability to write. Then followed a year in New York City in the printer's business, where he formed the acquaintance of a group of young people who were lovers of reading, with whom he spent his evenings.¹ The next eighteen months he spent in London, where, aside from his business, he attended plays and read books, thereby increasing his knowledge. Then he went to Philadelphia,² where he made his home for life, except during the years of public service abroad, and there continued the same methods of education, and added to them the famous Junto, a literary and debating club, organized for the mutual improvement of Franklin and a few favorite acquaintances. There they discussed questions of morals, politics, philosophy, poetry, history, and science. This, then, was the training he had for the social, literary, and political life which he lived so intensely and with such great blessing to mankind. His was a school in which he was both master and student—he found the subject-matter and determined the

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, Chap. II. ² *Ibid.*, Chap. III.

method. It was an education for life. By reading, he unlocked the storehouses of the wisdom of all people ; by conversing, arguing, and debating, he learned to be at ease with his fellow-men ; by writing, he learned to organize and enrich his knowledge and to direct the thoughts of others ; by his trade apprenticeship, he came close to life and learned to love the struggling masses, and acquired that deep interest in technical training which became the vital element in his educational scheme.

CHAPTER II

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION ADVOCATED BY FRANKLIN

THE sources in which are found in the most finished form Franklin's recommendations for the organization of education are: *The Rules governing the Junto; Proposals relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania; Sketch of an English School; Observations concerning the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Philadelphia Academy.* Other valuable ideas and explanations are found in minor treatises and in letters to friends.

Franklin, being himself self-educated, advocated a system whereby each individual could so utilize the sources and forces about him that in so doing he would become learned and useful. It was just the system by which he had educated himself. He believed that a man by his own efforts could reach perfection in almost any art. This we have set forth in the discussion of

System
of Education
advocated
by him.

his plan for attaining to moral perfection. ⁺ His altruism led him to give to others whatever he had found useful to himself, and his utilitarianism led him to seek from others what could be made of use to himself. This idea took shape in the Junto,¹ a literary and debating club organized by him when he was twenty-two years old, for the purpose of applying his principles of self-education in a coöperative way. The importance of mutual aid was strongly emphasized in the rules governing the club. Every member was required to propose queries for discussion, and periodically to produce and read an essay of his own writing upon some subject of interest to him. The debates were conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, and members were prohibited, by small pecuniary penalties, from indulging in offensive personalities, trifling disputes, or strivings for victory. This club continued for nearly forty years, and was, according to Franklin's judgment, the best school of philosophy, morality, and politics that then existed in the province. What he felt in after life that he had gotten from this method of training was a thorough, systematic habit of reading and the better

Literary and
Debating
Society.

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 81. B. I. 319.

habits of conversation, through the close observance of the rules which might prevent the members from displeasing each other. The debating method of the Junto is made prominent in the plan for an English school, to be noticed later.

* The Junto itself has developed into the American Philosophical Society, which has its offices and library at Philadelphia—a living monument of Franklin, a far-reaching and broadening influence upon present thought and action.

† No other writer has ever exemplified in his own life or attached more importance in his writings to the value of a good book as a means of education. Through them the best thoughts of the best writers may be conveyed to the minds of youth in such a way as to inform them and influence them for life. † By the coöperative method

Value and Use of a Library.	of the Junto a common library was built up for its members, whereby each member loaned his books for general use. Out of this idea grew up a subscription library for Philadelphia. ¹ Reading became fashionable, and the people became better acquainted with books, till within a few years they were better instructed and more intelligent than the people of the same rank generally in
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¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 99.

other countries. [†] So important a means of education he believed the library to be, that he said if one would read on any subject a few hours each day he would within a few years become educated. The extent to which this method has become a vital one in the education of to-day is attested by the thousands of both subscription and public libraries in the schools and cities of this country. [‡] In advocating the use of a library, Franklin is not original in the idea, for libraries and their value had been a favorite theme of writers on education for several centuries, and with these writers he was well acquainted, as is shown in his autobiography and by an analysis of his writings; but nevertheless he does deserve the credit of understanding the tremendous power of the library as an educational factor, and of having the practical ability to put one within the reach of the masses, that they might become informed, might acquire habits of mental industry, and might form strong characters through contact with the souls of the books.

We have given first his scheme for the education of those who, like himself, are deprived of a school training — a method whereby they may to some degree repair that loss.¹ We have

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 101.

now to present his plan for the education of the more favored class. He did not believe that

Self-education not the only Method. self-education was the best, but that it was the best possible substitute for a training by a master—a substitute that it was possible for every individual to avail himself of.

Also it is important to note that this method of education goes on throughout life and that it is both a vital part and a continuation of the systematic training to be given to the more fortunate through the schools proposed by him.

Nowhere in his writings did he have in mind a government system of public schools, and there were no such in his day in this country. In his own province the only school that was in any sense public was the Penn Charter school,¹

Function of the State in Education. founded in 1698, and which at the time of Franklin's proposed scheme for the education of the youth of Pennsylvania had admitted the children of all parents who applied.

The nearest approach to a state system of public schools was the compulsory schools of Massachusetts, established in 1648, though that was not a system of free schools, but was supported by individual tuition.

¹ Boone, *Education in the U. S.*, Chap. III.

However, Franklin did recognize the government's interest in the education of its citizens and strongly urged the duty upon the state, but his idea of state aid was through donations and endowments.¹ The idea of a central government, determining and directing through a system of taxation the schools of the entire country, was contrary to Franklin's nature, education, training, or philosophy of government. It was the true interest of this country, as expressed in his favorite phrase, "general welfare," and not the life of the state, as such, that concerned him in planning for the education of youth. He recites that the good education of youth has been esteemed by wise men in all ages as the surest foundation of the happiness, not only of private families, but of the commonwealths—that all governments had therefore made it a principal object of their attention to establish and endow such seminaries of learning as might supply the succeeding ages with men qualified to serve the public with honor to themselves and to their country. The state should grant charters to educational institutions that they might be conducted according to the same business principles as govern other corporate bodies,

¹ *Education of Youth in Pa.* S. I. 569.

and he also advised some system of government inspection to guard against their mismanagement.¹ And it is worthy of notice that the national government has not to this day gone much beyond Franklin's idea regarding a state system, but has left the organization and support to the local commonwealths, using her power only to aid and encourage through appropriation of funds where most needed.

The plan proposed for the organization of the Philadelphia Academy is what he believed could be used by all communities for general educational purposes. The Academy was chartered by the governor and placed under the control of a Board of Trustees. Its support came from private subscription, from tuitions, and from endowments. It was only for those who could pay for the instruction, though two years later a free school was attached to the Academy. This free school he approved of as a means of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic to poor children from eight to thirteen years of age who would otherwise probably never have attended any other school. But this free school was paid for by

¹ *Hints for Consideration Respecting the Orphan School-house in Philadelphia.* S. II. 159.

private subscriptions or by profits on the tuition school.

He believed that schools for public education should be free from church interference, and should be non-sectarian in every respect. The school should be supported by all churches alike, and no church should have a majority on the Board of Trustees, lest one sect should get control of the school and pervert it from its original purpose.¹

Function
of the
Church in
Education.

The lessons on morality outlined by him as a part of the curriculum were such as could be indorsed by every sect, though they fell short of what could be called religious instruction. The nearest approach to religious instruction was in the lessons that he would draw from history, showing the necessity of a public religion, the advantage of a religious character, and the excellency of the Christian religion above all others.² His attitude was in strict accord with the spirit of the founders of this country and has been to no extent deviated from to this day. This idea prevails in most every school district in the entire country.

Naturally one would think that a man who

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 159.

² *Proposals for an Academy*.

had read so broadly as Franklin had, had advocated so strongly the universal use of a library, and had touched life itself in so many phases

The Curriculum. would recommend a curriculum that was both broad and practical. He

would also be expected, from what has been said regarding his views of life, to give a large place to the ethical elements in subjects, but to place no stress upon religion. And in a choice between a general course and a technical one he would, as a result of his own apprenticeship, and his utilitarian philosophy, give preference to those subjects that best prepared for the professions. An examination of his three main treatises on this subject will show that he was consistent with these principles. These sources are: *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*, written in 1749; *Sketch of an English School*, written in 1749; *Observations Concerning the Original Intentions of the Founders of the Philadelphia Academy*, written in 1789.

The first was a plan for the organization of an academy, and it contained a discussion of the purpose of education, the value of the various subjects in the curriculum, the methods of teaching these subjects, and attached quotations

from the writers on education which he had studied in preparing his recommendation. The effect of these writers in determining his ideal is glaringly apparent. The second source was written just before the opening of the Academy, and was read at the opening by the principal; it was a detailed syllabus of the work for each of the six grades of the school. The third was a protest against the discrimination of the Trustees of the Academy against the English school. It is valuable because it is a close analysis of his ideas contained in the first source, and was written just at the close of his life and when forty years' test had been made of his first recommendations.

Regarding the subjects, he says it would be well if everything useful and everything ornamental could be taught; but since time is so short, it is therefore proposed that only those things that are likely to be *most* useful and *most* ornamental be taught, especial regard being had for those who prepare for any business, calling, or profession. He had in mind an English school that would be adapted to this country, although with the language modification it would be equally suited to any country. Whatever of the classical languages was recommended was

due to a compromise with the learned gentlemen whose subscriptions and countenance were needed in opening the school.¹ This compromise gave rise in the Academy to two parallel schools, the English and the Latin. The friends to the classical languages were the wealthy and learned few, but they were aggressive and soon succeeded in gaining for Latin and Greek the greatest favor from the Trustees, to such an extent that the English school declined in value till many parents, after protesting in vain, took their children out of the Academy and put them into private schools where they might get an English education. Franklin saw in this condition the best proof that his original idea of an English school was the kind most desired and most needed by the people, consequently he protested against the change, in the interest of posterity. That he had the modern point of view is attested by the many Manual Training, Industrial, and Technical Schools all over the land, that give no place to the classical languages. He anticipated enough of modern psychology to account for the continuance of Latin and Greek in the schools on the basis of the theory of habit. There is in mankind, he says,

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 133.

an unaccountable prejudice in favor of ancient customs and habitudes, which inclines to a continuance of them after the circumstances which formerly made them useful cease to exist—their continuance is the *chapeau bras* of modern literature. This point of view is not due to a lack of knowledge of languages, for he had a fairly good working knowledge of Latin, knew some Italian and Spanish, and was at ease in reading, writing, and talking French.¹ He recommended that the languages be offered only as electives and on condition that the English subjects should not be neglected.

The subjects of the curriculum were English grammar, rhetoric, composition, public speaking, English authors, geography, chronology, natural philosophy, ancient customs, morality, history, classical and modern languages (as electives), history of commerce. Many of those terms had not the same content that is given to them to-day, but that will be made clear in the discussion of each in particular.

It is strikingly noticeable that no comment is made on mathematics, in these sources, as a separate subject, but only as a part of such branches as geography, natural science, and other sub-

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 126.

jects requiring mathematical exactness; these facts were to be taught by the special teacher of mathematics. However, he attached the highest importance to this subject on both the arithmetical and geometrical side. Several years before the preparation of the plan for a school, he wrote a paper on the *Usefulness of Mathematics*,¹ in which he emphasized the commercial value of arithmetic by noting that no business can be carried on without the assistance of numbers, and that no scientist can do his work without it. The kind of arithmetic he would have taught is what is termed to-day business, or commercial arithmetic—that kind that had directly in view the student's functioning in society. It was to be taught in connection with other subjects in order that the child might feel his need of it and thereby appreciate it.

His idea about geometry was of the same practical kind; it was needed by the astronomer, the surveyor, the mariner. But most of this knowledge he expected the student to get after he left school and by work in his profession. He did look somewhat to the cultural value of the training; he believed that it was of greater value than other subjects in the formation of the

¹ *Influence of Mathematics*, 1735. S. II. 66. B. I. 414

mind, enlarging its capacity, and strengthening it to make it more capable of exact reasoning and discerning truth from falsehood in other subjects. This conception of the cultural value of mathematical training he had gotten from reading Plato's *Republic*. The total of mathematics in the six years' course was arithmetic, accounts, and the simplest principles of geometry and astronomy.

✓ Geography consisted of reading, with maps, for the purpose of pointing out the places where the greatest actions had occurred, naming the countries and giving their boundaries. What he called chronology was in fact only a study of the dates of the great events, the names of the states, and of the famous men that existed at that time. The primary purpose of such geography was to understand the map and the globe. He had no conception of the importance of teaching the physical elements as causal forces in determining the civilization of a country as a legitimate and vital part of geography, although he did provide for much of this dynamic work under what he called *History of Commerce*, where he would have taught the reasons and causes of the rise of industries, the progress of trade, and the change of customs.

History was the rich subject of the course, in fact he thought that most all subjects could be taught by the historic method. A character study of historic men and women would give the material for lessons in morality, whereby impressions of the beauty and influence of virtue would be made upon the minds of youth; the value of oratory in leading and governing mankind is estimated from the study of famous orators of the world; the necessity of a public religion and the superiority of the Christian religion could be taught as a generalization from the comparative study of the religions of the historic people; the elementary principles of good government could be best taught through history; the importance of logic in the discovery and defence of truth is a historic fact; the interest in and the desire to know the classical and modern languages could be induced by showing that the greatest nations and the wisest and most influential men have spoken and written in those languages; the means whereby this country can be made great are to be found in the study of causes of greatness in the countries of the world. Thus it is seen that every purpose in the study of history was to help the student in his daily living—to give him guiding

principles in the discharge of his private and public duties. Such a study of history is philosophical in its method and utilitarian in its purpose.

Natural history was to be begun in the third year of the school, and was to furnish information for conversation and letter writing, to enable merchants to understand commodities in trade, the handicraftsman to improve his business by new inventions and mixtures, and to help the farmer to improve his land. The most important recommendation in the light of present tendencies was for elementary lessons in agriculture, through gardening and through excursions to neighboring farms. He was practical enough to see that the masses needed this more than they needed the classics, and he was so far-sighted as to advocate what the people have been more than a century in realizing.

English grammar, composition, rhetoric, and public speaking were the heart of the curriculum, and the subject-matter and the method which he recommended were in the main those which he himself had used. Models in form and style were to be read and explained to the youth in terms of the rules of formal grammar, which were to be memorized by the youth from the

very first year of the school. Next in importance to the models in literature was the reading master, whom the pupils should imitate in vocal expression. Greatest attention was given from the beginning to written composition, public speaking, and theoretical and logical reasoning. In the highest class the best English authors were to be read and explained; these were Tillotson, Milton, Locke, Addison, Pope, Swift, and translations of the Latin and Greek classics. The standard by which he determined good literature was very high, though simple and practical: to be good, it should have a tendency to benefit the reader by improving his virtue or his knowledge; the author's method should be a just one,—that is, it should proceed clearly without confusion from the known to the unknown; the words chosen for emphasis should be those generally understood; the arrangement of words should give pleasure to the ear.¹

About the only criticism of consequence that could be made upon his English work was in beginning technical grammar too soon. (In the amount of work and the quality of the method

¹ *Letter to a Friend*, 1787. S. IX. 221. S. II. 553, *Idea of Literature*.

in English, the schools have just begun in the last few years to approach to his standard. He had great faith in the English language, and hoped soon to see it take the second place, the French being then the first language of the world. He regretted that the English language presented so many difficulties to the learner, so he therefore proposed several ways for simplifying it, but none of these were sufficiently practical to meet with favor in his day, though his recommendation for the simplification of the spelling is gradually going on in a natural process of selection.

Music was given no place in his course of study, though he himself valued it very highly and had considerable knowledge of it.¹ The omission of it was doubtless due to two reasons: first, that he thought it had not the utilitarian value of other subjects; and second, because he thought that modern music was very defective. In comparison with such music as the ancient legislators favored to influence the manners of their people, he believed that modern music was very inferior, inasmuch as it abounded in defects and absurdities, such as wrong accent, wrong emphasis, drawling, stuttering, and screaming.

¹ *Letter to Peter Franklin.* S. VI. 269.

He of course failed to see the power of music as a positive force in moral development.

Drawing was given very slight attention, and only consisted of imitation of prints and the simplest principles of perspective. An interest in this kind of work was to be created through the study of the history of commerce in the consideration of industrial machinery and of the implements of war. Training in art for æsthetic purposes was in no sense a part of his plan, and the neglect of this sense of the beautiful was possibly the greatest defect in his system; but it must be remembered even in making this criticism that Franklin lived in a day when every energy needed to be directed toward the mastery of the forces of nature which were promising just at that time a tremendous change in industrial life.

Physical exercise was made a prominent part of each child's duty, and consisted in running, leaping, wrestling, and swimming—all for the double purpose of preventing disease and giving strength and vigor to both body and mind. The quality of each kind of exercise was to be determined by the degree of warmth it produced in the body.¹ Walking was the best if sufficient

¹ *To his son William, 1772. S. VIII. 112.*

time could be given ; but if the time were limited, such exercise as that with the dumb-bells was the best. The famous *Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout*¹ is in part intended to show by the Socratic method the evil consequences of too little and of ill-chosen exercise. And in the attention that most people give to this, as well as to other laws of health, he observed that even philosophers are sages in maxim, but fools in conduct. He was an expert swimmer, and taught many of his friends the art. He even wrote two papers on *The Art of Swimming*.² At one time while in London he seriously considered opening a swimming school, which action, he observed in his biography, would possibly have materially altered his after life.³ Had he lived to-day he would doubtless have been a strong advocate of all manly sports, and the football boys' best friend.

Though the above scheme of education was for both sexes, yet Franklin had important views regarding the education of special classes that are worthy of separate consideration. He was too practical to think that any one curriculum could be made

Education of
Special
Classes.

¹ S. II. 194.

² S. VI. 286, 290.

³ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 65.

to meet the needs of all individuals or all classes. A special training was needed for each individual and for each class to fit it for its own peculiar functions in life.

The education of women to fill the places of wives and mothers is treated of in two letters to a friend,¹ as *Reflections on Courtship and Marriage*, a plan whereby happiness may be secured in the matrimonial state. He first

Of Women.

the education of young women in his day and the attitude of husbands toward their wives, and then tells what these should be. The education of young women was too superficial, and it consisted too largely in exterior accomplishments. This resulted merely in artificial behavior intended wholly for the purpose of catching men's eyes. The character of men's conversation with her was so trivial and flattering that she was not required to read and reflect on either serious or practical things. Men were lacking in a taste for real worth and were consequently not a proper stimulus to develop the higher elements in the woman, though she is just as capable by nature as man is of all the higher charms of friendship and intellectual

¹ *Reflections on Courtship and Marriage*, 1746. P. L. R.

companionship. Women were taught to have mercenary views regarding marriage — views which kill the tender sentiments, without which there can be no happiness in married life — a happiness which consists in a union of mind, a sympathy of affection and a mutual esteem and friendship. These finer sentiments, with the necessary prudence and discretion with regard to fortune, is what should be taught to both sexes alike. Men should accustom her to sober reason and good sense, and should pursue in common with her a course of profitable reading. A knowledge of accounts was also a necessary part of female education, as it would be of great use in case of widowhood.¹ He thought that nature makes man superior to woman and invests him with the guiding power in the more difficult affairs of life, though he must convince her of this superiority by using it gently, kindly, and prudently. And she must be taught to influence him by the just reverence which she pays him. It is also invaluable for her to continue in her married life the same care of person, of dress, and mental charm as she exercised in her days of courtship, on the theory that love, though it may come by chance, can be kept only by art.

¹ *Works of Franklin.* B. I. 195.

The education of poor children had been provided for by the annexation of a free school to the Philadelphia Academy, but there was still another class to be cared for. This was the

Of Orphans. orphans for whom homes as well as

schooling had to be provided. In a paper on this subject, intended for the consideration of the citizens of Philadelphia, he gives his idea of the characteristic features of such a school.¹

The school for orphans should be supported by charitable contributions, and no attempt should be made, as in the case of the Academy, to realize a profit on it. An account should be opened with each orphan, and the profits arising from his labor should go to him when discharged from the school, and if there should be a deficit he should be exhorted to pay it when he becomes able. The managers should consider the discharged ones still as their children, and counsel and help them in the affairs of life. These recommendations came from the fatherly heart of a great man, and they were contrary to the practices of the day, though they characterize the spirit in the management of such schools at the present time.

The last public act of Franklin was a memo-

¹ *Orphan School-house in Philadelphia.* S. II. 157.

rial addressed to Congress in 1789, by him as president of the Abolition Society, praying that they devise means for removing that inconsistency from the character of the American people, to promote mercy and justice toward the distressed race, to use all of its power to discourage traffic in the persons of our fellowmen. He had all his life been opposed to slavery and had improved every opportunity to make sentiment against it. Many of his letters contain denunciatory references to its practice and many rejoicings over the increasing sentiment in favor of its abolition.¹

His plea for the education of the freed negroes was presented by him to the Society for the Abolition of Slaves, of which he was president.² It proposed a general committee of twenty-four persons to be subdivided into four sub-committees.

1. A Committee of Inspection to superintend the moral conduct and the ordinary situation of the negro, and to advise him regarding his actions.

2. A Committee of Guardians to place out children and young persons and to arrange for

¹ To Benezet, 1772; S. VIII. 16. Dean Woodward, 1773; S. VIII. To John Wright, 1789; S. X. 405. Marquis de Condorcet, 1774; S. VI. 412.

² *Plan for Improving the Condition of the Blacks.* S. II. 513.

their education and to represent the state in its relationship to them as citizens.

3. A Committee on Education to superintend the school instruction of the free blacks, with power to send them to schools already in existence or to establish schools for them.

4. A Committee of Employment to get them positions or to establish industries for the purpose of employing them.

The funds for carrying on this work were to be secured by charitable donations and subscriptions and were to be controlled by a committee of the general society.

This method has been practically the one in use by the philanthropic societies interested in Southern education ever since Franklin's day. It shows both his deep, earnest humanity and his broad, practical method of dealing with questions of individual and public interest.

Much has already been said that belongs to the subject of methods of teaching, because

**Methods
of
Teaching.** Franklin's idea of a system of schools was the outgrowth of his own method of education. Yet so valuable are the methods advocated by him, they are worthy of separate notice. A comprehensive general description of his method is

contained in the word Socratic, which in reality tells the attitude of the teacher's or the pupil's mind, rather than the manner of presenting the subject.¹ As Franklin used it and recommended it to others, it consists in the habit of expressing one's self in terms of modest diffidence, never using such words as give an air of positiveness to one's opinion, but using terms that indicate that one's mind is in the attitude of an earnest inquirer. He believed that much of his success in public life in interesting, instructing, and leading people was due to Socratic. this method of presenting what he thought to be the truth — for by this method the hearer is not antagonized, but his sympathy is elicited and his coöperation secured. This method, in terms of the scientist, is experimental; it says we may not know, but we will seek the truth, that all who help may know. The two best illustrations of his use of this method are his examination in the British House of Lords in 1766² and his last speech in the convention that framed the Constitution of the United States in 1789.³ The first has the Socratic form of question and an-

¹ Sparks, *Life of Franklin*, p. 21.

² *Tracts of the American Revolution*. P. L. R.; B. III. 407.

³ S. V. 155.

swer, which are so clear, so full, and so skilfully arranged that they lead on to one, and only one answer, and this is, that "England is wrong and the Colonies have but one pride, and that is, to defend their rights as peers of the Englishmen in every respect." The answers are free from arrogance, but they show a decision and precision in all that he says, and display a mind filled with information concerning trade, manufacture, human nature, and public policy.

The second has Franklin's characteristic modest diffidence, an air of doubt as to the validity of his own opinions, and a feeling of assurance only in a superhuman guidance. He wanted unanimity in the vote to adopt the proposed constitution, though several, and himself one of them, did not favor some provisions of the draft. He admitted that he had many times changed his judgment and that he might do so again; he was willing to sacrifice his own opinions to the public good, and he urged them to do so. The result was the passage of the motion to adopt by unanimous consent. He used this method in both his private and public writings as well as in his social intercourse with men, and he therefore recommended it to all who would be successful in public life, or be loved by friends.

Teaching by example was another method in which he believed equally strong. Man he believed to be largely imitative, and as much inclined to follow the bad as the good. Hence, the better the models **By Example.** or examples given him to follow, the more beautiful and useful would he make his life. In a letter written near the close of his life¹ he says that this belief in the power of example determined for him what he would put into his biography. Consequently he wrote only what he thought would have a tendency to benefit the young reader and at the same time to interest and instruct him, by showing him the advantages of certain models of conduct as exemplified in his own success in life. This autobiography has been declared by many able critics to be one of the most wholesome literary products of its kind in existence. Belief in the power of example determined his recommendations for the selection of teachers. The teacher, he said, should have just those elements of moral and mental strength which the pupils were expected to acquire. In speech he should be a correct, pure speaker, and master of the English tongue. In teaching reading, the master should read the

¹ *To Benjamin Vaughan*, 1788. S. X. 364.

piece with proper modulation of voice, due emphasis, and suitable action, and then have the youth imitate his manner. He should have the student, in learning to write compositions, imitate some model in diction, force, and style, just as Franklin had imitated the Spectator.

The method of comparison also is everywhere present in his writings and is definitely described as he used it in reaching a conclusion on a subject concerning which there were conflicting arguments.¹ He arranged the arguments for and against in two parallel columns, and by cancellation determined where the balance lay. A conclusion reached in this way, he felt, was less liable to be rash or unsound than one reached by any other method. Many of his manuscripts show signs of this same careful method, some being scratched, erased, and interlined till they are almost illegible. It was in this way that the final copy acquired such a clear, simple, and convincing style.² In his proposals for an academy, the work outlined in history is most all to be done by the comparative methods. By comparing the lives and characters of the great men of his-

¹ *To Dr. Priestly*, Sept. 19, 1772. S. B. IV. 522.

² *To Benjamin Vaughan*, 1789. S. X. 397.

tory he would get his moral lessons, his incentives for the study of oratory, his reasons for a public religion, his principles of sound politics, the advantage of classical training.

These, then, are the fundamental or general methods used and advocated by Franklin, out of which grew his special methods of teaching, the character of which is sufficiently apparent from what has been given of the man and his works.

We have now before us the ideal man and the ideal system of schools, as conceived and advocated by Franklin, who himself was one of the greatest educators that the world has ever had. It only remains to present his ideal teacher, who through such a system of schools and by the use of such methods could come nearest to the realization of the ideal man in his pupil. We let his own words characterize this teacher: "I think that talents for the education of youth are the gift of God, and that he on whom they are bestowed is as strongly *called* as if he heard a voice from heaven, nothing more surely pointing out duty in a public service than the ability and opportunity of performing it."¹

¹ To Dr. Samuel Johnson. B. II. 204.

PART II

FRANKLIN'S OWN WRITINGS
ON EDUCATION

FRANKLIN'S OWN WRITINGS ON EDUCATION

I

PLAN OF DAILY EXAMINATIONS IN THE MORAL VIRTUES

[The following list of thirteen virtues, with their precepts which expressed the meaning he gave to them, Franklin placed on separate pages in a little book which he carried with him for more than fifty years. Each day he graded himself upon these virtues, concentrating his attention for a week at the time upon a single virtue. The form of one page is also given; the virtue named at the top of the page is the one upon which he concentrated his attention for the week. Franklin's conception of what he accomplished by the use of this scheme is told in a quotation from his autobiography: "It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owes the constant felicity of his life down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. Whatever reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation."]

LIST OF VIRTUES

1. **TEMPERANCE.**—Eat not to dulness; drink not to elevation.

2. **SILENCE.**—Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3. **ORDER.**—Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. **RESOLUTION.**—Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5. **FRUGALITY.**—Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; that is, waste nothing.

6. **INDUSTRY.**—Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. **SINCERITY.**—Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; speak accordingly.

8. **JUSTICE.**—Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. **MODERATION.**—Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think you deserve.

10. **CLEANLINESS.**—Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

11. **TRANQUILLITY.**—Be not disturbed at trifles or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. **CHASTITY.** . . .

13. **HUMILITY.**—Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

FORM OF PAGE

TEMPERANCE

Eat not to dulness ; drink not to elevation.

Sun. M. T. W. Th. F. S.

Tem.-----

Sil.-----x-----x-----x-----x-----

Ord.-----x-----x-----x-----x-----

Res.-----x-----x-----

Fru.-----x-----x-----

Ind.-----x-----

Sinc.-----

Jus.-----

Mod.-----

Clea.-----

Tran.-----

Chas.-----

Hum.-----

II

FATHER ABRAHAM'S SPEECH

[This speech is a compilation and rearrangement of the prefaces, proverbs, and poems of *Poor Richard's Almanacs*. It is Franklin's masterpiece. He wrote it after twenty-five years' use had been made of Poor Richard's sayings. It is a little classic with which every one should be familiar. Its teachings, if followed, would give strength and happiness to many lives now weak and wretched.]

I HAVE heard that nothing gives an author so great pleasure as to find his works respectfully quoted by other learned authors. This pleasure I have seldom enjoyed; for though I have been, if I may say it without vanity, an eminent author (of almanacs) annually, now a full quarter of a century, my brother authors in the same way, for what reason I know not, have ever been very sparing in their applause, and no other author has taken the least notice of me; so that, did not my writings produce me some solid pudding, the great deficiency of praise would have quite discouraged me. I concluded, at length,

that the people were the best judges of my merit, for they buy my works; and besides, in my rambles, where I am not personally known, I have frequently heard one or other adages of mine repeated, with "as Poor Richard says," at the end on't. This gave me some satisfaction, as it showed not only that my instructions were regarded, but discovered likewise some respect for my authority; and I own that, to encourage the practice of remembering and reading those wise sentences, I have sometimes quoted myself with great gravity. Judge, then, how much I must have been gratified by an incident I am going to relate to you.

I stopped my horse lately where a great number of people were collected at an auction of merchants' goods. The hour of the sale not being come, they were conversing on the badness of the times, and one of the company called to a plain, clean old man with white locks: "Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the times? will not these heavy taxes quite ruin the country? how shall we ever be able to pay them? What would you advise us to do?" Father Abraham stood up and replied: "If you would have my advice, I will give it to you in short, for, 'A word to the wise is enough,' as Poor

Richard says." They joined in desiring him to speak his mind, and gathering around him, he proceeded as follows:—

"Friends," said he, "the taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our folly; and from these taxes the commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an abatement. However, let us hearken to good advice, and something may be done for us; God helps them that help themselves, as Poor Richard says.

"I. It would be thought a hard government that should task its people one-tenth part of their time, to be employed in its service; but idleness taxes many of us much more; sloth, by bringing on diseases, absolutely shortens life. Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright, as poor Richard says. But dost thou love life? then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of, as Poor Richard says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep,

forgetting that the sleeping fox catches no poultry, and that there will be sleeping enough in the grave, as Poor Richard says.

"If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be, as Poor Richard says, the greatest prodigality; since, as he elsewhere tells, Lost time is never found again; and what we call time enough always proves little enough. Let us then be up and doing, and doing to the purpose; so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity. Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry, all easy; and He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while Laziness travels so slowly that Poverty soon overtakes him. Drive thy business, let not that drive thee; and Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise, as Poor Richard says.

"So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times? We make these times better, if we bestir ourselves. Industry need not wish, and he that lives upon hopes will die fasting. There are no gains without pains; then help, hands, for I have no lands; or, if I have, they are smartly taxed. He that hath a trade hath an estate; and he that hath a calling hath an office of profit and honor, as Poor Richard says;

but then the trade must be worked at, and the calling followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious we shall never starve; for At the workingman's house hunger looks in, but dares not enter. Nor will the bailiff or the constable enter; for Industry pays debts, while despair increaseth them. What though you have found no treasure, nor has any rich relation left you a legacy; Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to Industry. Then plough deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep. Work while it is called to-day, for you know not how much you may be hindered to-morrow. One to-day is worth two to-morrows, as Poor Richard says; and further, Never leave that till to-morrow which you can do to-day. If you were a servant, would you not be ashamed that a good master should catch you idle? Are you then your own master? Be ashamed to catch yourself idle when there is so much to be done for yourself, your family, your country, your king. Handle your tools without mittens; remember that The cat in gloves catches no mice, as Poor Richard says. / It is true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed; but stick to it

steadily and you will see great effects ; for Constant dropping wears away stones ; and By Diligence and Patience the mouse ate in two the cable ; and Little strokes fell great oaks.

“Methinks I hear some of you say, Must a man afford himself no leisure ? I will tell thee, my friend, what Poor Richard says : Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure ; and since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour. Leisure is time for doing something useful ; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never ; for A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things. Many, without labor, would live by their wits only, but they break for want of stock ; whereas, industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect. Fly pleasures and they will follow you. The diligent spinner has a large shift ; and now I have a sheep and a cow every one bids me good-morrow.

“II. But with our industry we must likewise be steady and careful, and oversee our own affairs with our own eyes, and not trust too much to others ; for, as Poor Richard says, —

I never saw an oft-removed tree,
Nor yet an oft-removed family,
That throve so well as those that settled be.

And again, Three removes are as bad as a fire ;
and again, Keep thy shop, and thy shop will
keep thee ; and again, If you would have your
business done, go ; if not, send. And again, —

He that by the plough would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive.

And again, The eye of the master will do more
work than both his hands ; and again, Want of
care does us more damage than want of knowl-
edge ; and again, Not to oversee workmen is to
leave them your purse open. Trusting too much
to others' care is the ruin of many ; for, In the
affairs of this world men are sayed, not by faith
but by the want of it ; but a man's own care is
profitable ; for, If you would have a faithful
servant and one that you like, serve yourself.
A little neglect may breed great mischief ; for
want of a nail the shoe was lost ; and for want
of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and
slain by the enemy ; all for a little care about a
horse-shoe nail.

“III. So much for industry, my friends, and
attention to one's own business ; but to these we
must add frugality, if we would make our indus-
try more certainly successful. A man may, if
he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his

nose all his life to the grindstone, and die not worth a groat at last. A fat kitchen makes a lean will; and —

Many estates are spent in the getting,
Since women forsook spinning and knitting,
And men for punch forsook hewing and splitting.

“If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as getting. The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her outgoes are greater than her incomes.

“Away then with your expensive follies, and you will not then have so much cause to complain of hard times, heavy taxes, and chargeable families, for —

Women and wine, game and deceit,
Make the wealth small and the want great.

And further, What maintains one vice would bring up two children. You may think, perhaps, that a little tea or a little punch now and then, diet a little more costly, clothes a little finer, and a little entertainment now and then can be no great matter; but remember, Many a little makes a mickle. Beware of little expenses; A small leak will sink a great ship, as Poor Richard says; and again, Who dainties love shall beg-

gars prove ; and moreover, Fools make feasts and wise men eat them.

“ Here you are all got together at this sale of fineries and knickknacks. You call them goods ; but, if you do not take care, they will prove evils to some of you. You expect they will be sold cheap, and perhaps they may for less than they cost, but, if you have no occasion for them, they must be dear to you. Remember what Poor Richard says, Buy what thou hast no need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy necessities. And again, At a great pennyworth pause a while. He means that perhaps the cheapness is apparent only, and not real ; or the bargain, by straightening thee in thy business, may do thee more harm than good. For in another place he says, Many have been ruined by buying good pennyworths. Again, it is foolish to lay out money in a purchase of repentance ; and yet this folly is practised every day at auctions, for want of minding the almanac. Many a one, for the sake of finery on the back, have gone with a hungry belly and half starved their families. Silks and satins, scarlet and velvets, put the kitchen fire out, as Poor Richard says.

“ These are not the necessities of life ; they

can scarcely be called the conveniences ; and yet, only because they look pretty, how many want to have them. By these, and other extravagances, the genteel are reduced to poverty, and forced to borrow of those whom they formerly despised, but who, through industry and frugality, have maintained their standing ; in which case it appears plainly that, A ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees, as Poor Richard says. Perhaps they have a small estate left them which they knew not the getting of ; they think, It is day and it never will be night ; that a little to be spent out of so much is not worth minding ; but Always taking out of the meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom, as Poor Richard says ; and then, When the well is dry, they know the worth of water. But this they might have known before, if they had taken his advice. If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some ; for He that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing, as Poor Richard says ; and, indeed, So does he that lends to such people, when he goes to get it again. Poor Richard further advises, and says, —

Fond pride of dress is sure a very curse ;
Ere fancy you consult, consult your purse.

And again, Pride is as loud a beggar as Want, and a great deal more saucy. When you have bought one fine thing, you must buy ten more, that your appearance may be all of a piece; but Poor Richard says, It is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it. And it is as truly folly for the poor to ape the rich, as for the frog to swell in order to equal the ox.

Vessels large may venture more,
But little boats should keep near shore.

It is, however, a folly soon punished; for, as Poor Richard says, Pride that dines on vanity, sups on contempt. Pride breakfasted with plenty, dined with poverty, and supped with infamy. And after all, of what use is this pride of appearance, for which so much is risked, so much is suffered? It cannot promote health, nor ease pain; it makes no increase of merit in the person; it creates envy; it hastens misfortune.

“But what madness must it be to run in debt for these superfluities? We are offered by the terms of this sale six months’ credit; and that, perhaps, has induced some of us to attend it, because we cannot spend the ready money, and hope now to be fine without it. But, ah! think

what you do when you run in debt; to give to another power over your liberty. If you cannot pay at the time, you will be ashamed to see your creditor; you will be in fear when you speak to him; you will make poor, pitiful, sneaking excuses, and by degrees come to lose your veracity and sink into base, downright lying; for The second vice is lying, the first is running into debt, as Poor Richard says; and again, to the same purpose, Lying rides upon Debt's back; whereas, a free-born Englishman ought not to be ashamed nor afraid to see or speak to any man living. But poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue. It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright.

“What would you think of that prince, or of that government, who should issue an edict forbidding you to dress like a gentleman or gentlewoman, on pain of imprisonment or servitude? Would not you say that you were free, have a right to dress as you please, and that such an edict would be a breach of your privileges, and such a government tyrannical? And yet you are about to put yourself under such tyranny, when you run in debt for such dress. Your creditor has authority at his pleasure to deprive you of your liberty, by confining you in gaol till

you shall be able to pay him. When you have got your bargain, you may, perhaps, think little of payment; but, as Poor Richard says, creditors have better memories than debtors; creditors are a superstitious set, great observers of set days and times. The day comes round before you are aware, and the demand is made before you are prepared to satisfy it; or, if you bear your debt in mind, the term, which at first seemed so long, will, as it lessens, appear extremely short. Time will seem to have added wings to his heels as well as his shoulders. Those have a short Lent who owe money to be paid at Easter. At present, perhaps, you may think yourselves in thriving circumstances, and that you can bear a little extravagance without injury; but

For age and want save while you may;
No morning sun lasts a whole day.

Gain may be temporary and uncertain, but ever, while you live, expense is constant and certain; and, It is easier to build two chimneys than to keep one in fuel, as Poor Richard says; so, Rather go to bed supperless than rise in debt.

Get what you can, and what you get hold;
'Tis the stone that will turn all your lead into gold.

And when you have got the Philosopher's Stone, sure you will no longer complain of bad times, or the difficulty of paying taxes.

"IV. This doctrine, my friends, is reason and wisdom; but, after all, do not depend too much upon your own industry and frugality and prudence, though excellent things; for they may all be blasted, without the blessing of Heaven; and, therefore, ask that blessing humbly, and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it, but comfort and help them. Remember Job suffered, and was afterwards prosperous.

"And now, to conclude, Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other, as Poor Richard says, and scarce in that; for, it is true we may give advice, but we cannot give conduct. However, remember this: They that will not be counselled cannot be helped; and further, that, If you will not hear Reason, she will surely rap your knuckles, as Poor Richard says."

Thus the old gentleman ended his harangue. The people heard it and approved the doctrine, and immediately practised the contrary, just as if it had been a common sermon; for the auction opened, and they began to buy extrava-

gantly. I found the good man had thoroughly studied my almanacs, and digested all I had dropped on these topics during the course of twenty-five years. The frequent mention he made of me must have tired any one else; but my vanity was wonderfully delighted with it, though I was conscious not a tenth part of the wisdom was my own which he ascribed to me, but rather the gleanings that I had made of the sense of all ages and nations.

However, I resolved to be better for the echo of it; and, though I had at first determined to buy stuff for a new coat, I went away resolved to wear my old one a little longer. Reader, if thou wilt do the same, thy profit will be as great as mine. I am, as ever, thine to serve thee,

RICHARD SAUNDERS.

III

PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH IN PENNSYLVANIA

[This paper was written by Franklin in 1749. It is a plan for the organization of an Academy at Philadelphia and it contains a discussion of the purpose of education, the value of the various subjects in the curriculum, and the methods of teaching these subjects. The Academy was organized pretty much after this plan and was many years later developed into what is now the University of the State of Pennsylvania. Franklin was, until the time of his death in 1790, a member of the Board of Trustees of this school, and he gave much of his time, money, and thought to its management.]

THE good education of youth has been esteemed by wise men in all ages as the surest foundation of the happiness both of private families and of commonwealths. Almost all governments have therefore made it a principal object of their attention to establish and endow with proper revenues such seminaries of learning as might supply the succeeding age with

men qualified to serve the public with honor to themselves and to their country.

Many of the first settlers of these provinces were men who had received a good education in Europe; and to their wisdom and good management we owe much of our present prosperity. But their hands were full, and they could not do all things. The present race are not thought to be generally of equal ability; for, though the American youth are allowed not to want capacity, yet the best capacities require cultivation; it being truly with them as with the best ground, which, unless well tilled and sowed with profitable seed, produces only ranker weeds.

That we may obtain the advantages arising from an increase of knowledge, and prevent, as much as may be, the mischievous consequences that would attend a general ignorance among us, the following hints are offered toward forming a plan for the education of the youth of Pennsylvania, viz. :—

It is proposed,

That some persons of leisure and public spirit apply for a charter, by which they may be incorporated, with power to erect an Academy for the education of youth, to govern the same, provide masters, make rules, receive donations,

purchase lands, and to add to their number from time to time such other persons as they shall judge suitable.

That the members of the corporation make it their pleasure and, in some degree, their business, to visit the Academy often, encourage and countenance the youth, countenance and assist the masters, and by all means in their power advance the usefulness and reputation of the design; that they look on the students as in some sort their children, treat them with familiarity and affection, and, when they have behaved well, and gone through their studies, and are to enter the world, zealously unite, and make all the interest that can be made to establish them, whether in business, offices, marriages, or any other thing for their advantage, preferably to all other persons whatsoever, even of equal merit.

And if men may, and frequently do, catch such a taste for cultivating flowers, for planting, grafting, inoculating, and the like, as to despise all other amusements for their sake, why may not we expect they should acquire a relish for that more useful culture of young minds. Thomson says, —

“’Tis joy to see the human blossoms blow,
When infant reason grows apace, and calls

For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
 Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
 To teach the young idea how to shoot;
 To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
 To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
 The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

That a house be provided for the Academy, ✓
 if not in the town, not many miles from it; the
 situation high and dry, and, if it may be, not far
 from a river, having a garden, orchard, meadow,
 and a field or two.

That the house be furnished with a library if ✓
 in the country (if in the town, the town libraries
 may serve), with maps of all countries, globes,
 some mathematical instruments, an apparatus
 for experiments in natural philosophy and for
 mechanics; prints of all kinds, prospects, build-
 ings, and machines.

That the rector be a man of good understand- ✓
 ing, good morals, diligent and patient, learned in
 the languages and sciences, and a correct, pure
 speaker and writer of the English tongue; to
 have such tutors under him as shall be necessary.

That the boarding scholars diet together,
 plainly, temperately, and frugally.

That, to keep them in health and to strengthen
 and render active their bodies, they be frequently

exercised in running, leaping, wrestling, and swimming.

That they have peculiar habits to distinguish them from other youth, if the Academy be in or near the town; for this, among other reasons, that their behavior may be the better observed.

As to their studies, it would be well if they ✓ could be taught everything that is useful, and everything that is ornamental. But art is long, and their time is short. It is therefore proposed that they learn those things that are likely to be most useful and most ornamental, regard being ✓ had to the several professions for which they are intended.

All should be taught to write a fair hand, and swift, as that is useful to all. And with it may be learned something of drawing, by imitation of prints, and some of the first principles of perspective.

Arithmetic, accounts, and some of the first principles of geometry and astronomy.

The English language might be taught by grammar; in which some of our best writers, as Tillotson, Addison, Pope, Algernon Sidney, Cato's Letters, etc., should be classics; the style principally to be cultivated being the clear and

the concise. Reading should also be taught, and pronouncing properly, distinctly, emphatically; not with an even tone, which underdoes, nor a theatrical, which overdoes nature.

To form their style, they should be put on writing letters to each other, making abstracts of what they read, or writing the same things in their own words; telling or writing stories lately read, in their own expressions, all to be revised and corrected by the tutor, who should give his reasons and explain the force and import of words.

To form their pronunciation, they may be put on making declamations, repeating speeches, and delivering orations; the tutor assisting at the rehearsals, teaching, advising, and correcting their accent.

But if history be made a constant part of their reading, such as the translations of the Greek and Roman historians, and the modern histories of ancient Greece and Rome, may not almost all kinds of useful knowledge be that way introduced to advantage, and with pleasure to the student? As

Geography, by reading with maps, and being required to point out the places where the greatest actions were done, to give their old and new

names, with the bounds, situation, and extent of the countries concerned.

Chronology, by the help of Helvicus or some other writer of the kind, who will enable them to tell when those events happened, what princes were contemporaries, and what states or famous men flourished about that time; the several principal epochs to be first well fixed in their memories.

Ancient customs, religious and civil, being frequently mentioned in history, will give occasion for explaining them, in which the print of medals, basso-rilievos, and ancient monuments will greatly assist.

Morality, by descanting and making continual observations on the causes of the rise or fall of any man's character, fortune, and power, mentioned in history; the advantages of temperance, order, frugality, industry, and perseverance. Indeed, the general natural tendency of reading good history must be to fix in the minds of youth deep impressions of the beauty and usefulness of virtue of all kinds, public spirit, and fortitude.

History will show the wonderful effects of oratory in governing, turning, and leading great bodies of mankind,—armies, cities, nations. When the minds of youth are struck with ad-

miration at this, then is the time to give them the principles of that art, which they will study with taste and application. Then they may be made acquainted with the best models among the ancients, their beauties being particularly pointed out to them. Modern political oratory being chiefly performed by the pen and press, its advantages over the ancient in some respects are to be shown, — as that its effects are more extensive and more lasting.

History will also afford frequent opportunities of showing the necessity of a public religion, from its usefulness to the public; the advantage of a religious character among private persons; the mischiefs of superstition, and the excellency of the Christian religion above all others, ancient or modern.

History will also give occasion to expatiate on the advantage of civil orders and constitutions, — how men and their properties are protected by joining in societies and establishing government; their industry encouraged and rewarded, arts invented, and life made more comfortable; the advantages of liberty, mischiefs of licentiousness, benefits arising from good laws and a due execution of justice. Thus may the first principles of sound politics be fixed in the minds of youth.

On historical occasions, questions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, will naturally arise, and may be put to youth, which they may debate in conversation and in writing. When they ardently desire victory, for the sake of the praise attending it, they will begin to feel the want and be sensible of the use of logic, of the art of reasoning to discover truth, and of arguing to defend it, and convince adversaries. This would be the time to acquaint them with the principles of that art. Grotius, Puffendorff, and some other writers of the same kind may be used on these occasions to decide their disputes. (Public disputes warm the imagination, whet the industry, and strengthen the natural abilities.)

When you are told that the great men whose lives and actions they read in history spoke two of the best languages that ever were, the most expressive, copious, beautiful ; and that the finest writings, the most correct compositions, the most perfect productions of human wit and wisdom, are in those languages, which have endured for ages, and will endure while there are men ; that no translation can do them justice, or give the pleasure found in reading the originals ; that those languages contain all science ; that one of them is become almost universal, being the

language of learned men in all countries; and that to understand them is a distinguishing ornament; they may therefore be made desirous of learning those languages, and their industry sharpened in the acquisition of them. All intended for divinity should be taught the Latin and Greek; for physic, the Latin, Greek, and French; for law, the Latin and French; merchants, the French, German, and Spanish; and, though all should not be compelled to learn Latin, Greek, or the modern foreign languages, yet none that have an ardent desire to learn them should be refused, their English, arithmetic, and other studies absolutely necessary being at the same time not neglected.

If the new Universal History were also read, it would give a connected idea of human affairs, so far as it goes, which should be followed by the best modern histories, particularly of our mother country; then of these colonies, which should be accompanied with observations on their rise, increase, use to Great Britain, encouragements and discouragements, the means to make them flourish and secure their liberties.

With the history of men, times, and nations, should be read, at proper hours or days, some of the best histories of nature, which should not

only be delightful to youth, and furnish them with matter for their letters, as well as other history, but would afterward be of great use to them, whether they are merchants, handicrafts, or divines; enabling the first the better to understand many commodities and drugs, the second to improve his trade or handicraft by new mixtures and materials, and the last to adorn his discourses by beautiful comparisons, and strengthen them by new proofs of divine Providence. The conversation of all will be improved by it, as occasions frequently occur of making natural observations, which are instructive, agreeable, and entertaining in almost all companies. Natural history will also afford opportunities of introducing many observations relating to the preservation of health, which may be afterward of great use. Arbuthnot on *Air and Aliment*, Sanctorius on *Perspiration*, Lemery on *Foods*, and some others, may now be read, and a very little explanation will make them sufficiently intelligible to youth.

While they are reading natural history, might not a little gardening, planting, grafting, and inoculating be taught and practised, and now and then excursions made to the neighboring plantations of the best farmers, their methods observed

and reasoned upon for the information of youth? The improvement of agriculture being useful to all, and skill in it no disparagement to any.

The history of commerce, of the invention of arts, rise of manufactures, progress of trade, change of its seats, with the reason and causes, may also be made entertaining to youth, and will be useful to all. And this, with the accounts in other history of the prodigious force and effect of engines and machines used in war, will naturally introduce a desire to be instructed in mechanics, and to be informed of the principles of that art by which weak men perform such wonders, labor is saved, and manufactures expedited. This will be the time to show them prints of ancient and modern machines; to explain to them, to let them be copied, and to give lectures in mechanical philosophy.

With the whole should be constantly inculcated and cultivated that benignity of mind which shows itself in searching for and seizing every opportunity to serve and to oblige, and is the foundation of what is called good breeding, — highly useful to the possessor, and most agreeable to all.

The idea of what is true merit should also be often presented to youth, explained and impressed

on their minds, as consisting in an inclination, joined with an ability, to serve mankind, one's country, friends, and family; which ability is, with the blessing of God, to be acquired or greatly increased by true learning, and should indeed be the great aim and end of all learning.

IV

SKETCH OF AN ENGLISH SCHOOL

FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY

[Franklin's plan was for an English school, with no ancient or modern languages. It was to fit the youth "for learning any business, calling, or profession, except such wherein languages are required." This *Sketch of an English School* was written in 1749, and read by the principal at the opening of the Academy.]

It is expected that every scholar, to be admitted into this school, be at least able to pronounce and divide the syllables in reading, and to write a legible hand. None to be received that are under nine years of age.

First or Lowest Class

Let the first class learn the English Grammar rules, and at the same time let particular care be taken to improve them in orthography. Perhaps the latter is best done by pairing the scholars: two of those nearest equal in their

spelling to be put together. Let these strive for victory, each propounding ten words every day to the other to be spelled. He that spells truly most of the other's words is victor for that day; he that is victor most days in a month to obtain a prize, a pretty, neat book of some kind, useful in their future studies. This method fixes the attention of children extremely to the orthography of words, and makes them good spellers very early. It is a shame for a man to be so ignorant of this little art in his own language as to be perpetually confounding words of like sound and different significance; the consciousness of which defect makes some men, otherwise of good learning and understanding, averse to writing even a common letter.

Let the pieces read by the scholars in this class be short, such as Croxall's Fables, and little stories. In giving the lesson let it be read to them; let the meaning of the difficult words in it be explained to them; and let them con over by themselves before they are called to read to the master or usher, who is to take particular care that they do not read too fast, and that they duly observe the stops and pauses. A vocabulary of the most usual difficult words might be formed for their use, with explana-

tions; and they might daily get a few of those words and explanations by heart, which would a little exercise their memories; or at least they might write a number of them in a small book for the purpose, which would help to fix the meaning of those words in their minds, and at the same time furnish every one with a little dictionary for his future use.

The Second Class

To be taught reading with attention, and with proper modulation of the voice, according to the sentiment and the subject.

Some short pieces, not exceeding the length of a Spectator, to be given this class for lessons (and some of the easier Spectators would be very suitable for the purpose). These lessons might be given every night as tasks, the scholars to study them against the morning. Let it then be required of them to give an account, first, of the parts of speech and construction of one or two sentences. This will oblige them to recur frequently to their grammar and fix its principal rules in their memory. Next, of the intention of the writer, or the scope of the piece, the meaning of each sentence and of every common word. This would early acquaint them with the

meaning and force of words, and give them that most necessary habit of reading with attention.

The master then to read the piece with the proper modulations of voice, due emphasis, and suitable action, where action is required; and put the youth on imitating his manner. Where the author has used an expression not the best, let it be pointed out; and let his beauties be particularly remarked to the youth.

Let the lessons for reading be varied, that the youth may be acquainted with good style of all kinds, in prose and verse, and the proper manner of reading each kind; sometimes a well-told story, a piece of a sermon, a general's speech to his soldiers, a speech in a tragedy, some part of a comedy, an ode, a satire, a letter, blank verse, Hudibrastic, heroic, etc. But let such lessons be chosen for reading as contain some useful instruction, whereby the understanding or morals of the youth may at the same time be improved.

It is required that they should first study and understand the lessons before they are put upon reading them properly; to which end each boy should have an English dictionary to help him over difficulties. When our boys read English to us we are apt to imagine they understand what they read, because we do, and because it

is their mother tongue. But they often read, as parrots speak, knowing little or nothing of the meaning. And it is not possible a reader should give the due modulation to his voice and pronounce properly, unless his understanding goes before his tongue and makes him master of the sentiment. Accustoming boys to read aloud what they do not first understand is the cause of those even, set tones so common among readers, which when they have once got a habit of using they find so difficult to correct; by which means among fifty readers we scarcely find a good one. For want of good reading pieces published with a view to influence the minds of men, for their own or public benefit, lose half their force. Were there but one good reader in a neighborhood a public orator might be heard throughout a nation with the same advantages, and have the same effect upon his audience as if they stood within the reach of his voice.

The Third Class

To be taught speaking properly and gracefully, which is nearer akin to good reading, and naturally follows it in the studies of youth. Let the scholars of this class begin with learning the

elements of rhetoric from some short system, so as to be able to give an account of the most useful tropes and figures. Let all their bad habits of speaking, all offences against good grammar, all corrupt or foreign accents, and all improper phrases, be pointed out to them. Short speeches from the Roman or other history, or from the parliamentary debates, might be got by heart, and delivered with the proper action, etc. Speeches and scenes in our best tragedies and comedies (avoiding everything that might injure the morals of youth) might likewise be got by rote, and the boys exercised in delivering or acting them, great care being taken to form their manner after the truest models.

For their further improvement, and a little to vary their studies, let them now begin to read history, after having got by heart a short table of the principal epochs of chronology. They may begin with Rollin's Ancient and Roman Histories and proceed at proper hours, as they go through the subsequent classes, with the best histories of our own nation and the colonies. Let emulation be excited among the boys by giving, weekly, little prizes, or other small encouragements, to those who are able to give the best account of what they have read, as to time,

places, names of persons, etc. This will make them read with attention, and imprint the history well in their memories. In remarking on the history the master will have fine opportunities of instilling instruction of various kinds, and improving the morals as well as the understandings of youth.

The natural and mechanic history, contained in the *Spectacle de la Nature*, might also be begun in this class, and continued through the subsequent classes by other books of the same kind; for, next to the knowledge of duty, this kind of knowledge is certainly the most useful, as well as the most entertaining. The merchant may thereby be enabled better to understand many commodities in trade; the handicraftsman to improve his business by new instruments, mixtures, and materials; and frequently hints are given for new manufactures, or new methods of improving land, that may be set on foot greatly to the advantage of a country.

The Fourth Class

To be taught composition. Writing one's own language well is the necessary accomplishment after good speaking. It is the writing master's business to take care that the boys make fair

characters and place them straight and even in the lines; but to form their style, and even to take care that the stops and capitals are properly disposed, is the part of the English master. The boys should be put on writing letters to each other on common occurrences, and on various subjects, imaginary business, etc., containing little stories, accounts of their late reading, what parts of authors please them, and why; letters of congratulation, of compliment, of request, of thanks, of recommendation, of admonition, of consolation, of expostulation, excuse, etc. In these they should be taught to express themselves clearly, concisely, and naturally, without affected words or high-flown phrases. All their letters to pass through the master's hands, who is to point out the faults, advise the corrections, and commend what he finds right. Some of the best letters published in our own language, as Sir William Temple's, those of Pope and his friends, and some others, might be set before the youth as models, their beauties pointed out and explained by the master, the letters themselves transcribed by the scholar.

Dr. Johnson's *Ethices Elementa*, or *First Principles of Morality*, may now be read by the scholars, and explained by the master, to lay a

solid foundation of virtue and piety in their minds. And as this class continues the reading of history, let them now, at proper hours, receive some further instruction in chronology, and in that part of geography (from the mathematical master) which is necessary to understand the maps and globes. They should also be acquainted with the modern names of the places they find mentioned in ancient writers. The exercises of good reading and proper speaking still continued at suitable times.

Fifth Class

To improve the youth in composition, they may now, besides continuing to write letters, begin to write little essays in prose, and sometimes in verse; not to make them poets, but for this reason, that nothing acquaints a lad so speedily with variety of expression as the necessity of finding such words and phrases as will suit the measure, sound, and rhyme of verse, and at the same time well express the sentiment. These essays should all pass under the master's eye, who will point out their faults, and put the writer on correcting them. Where the judgment is not ripe enough for forming new essays, let the sentiments of a *Spectator* be given, and

required to be clothed in the scholar's own words ; or the circumstances of some good story, the scholar to find expression. Let them be put sometimes on abridging a paragraph of a diffuse author ; sometimes on dilating or amplifying what is written more closely. And now let Dr. Johnson's *Noetica*, or *First Principles of Human Knowledge*, containing a logic or art of reasoning, etc., be read by the youth and the difficulties that may occur to them be explained by the master. (The reading of history, and the exercises of good reading and just speaking, still continued.)

Sixth Class

In this class, besides continuing the studies of the preceding in history, rhetoric, logic, moral and natural philosophy, the best English authors may be read and explained ; as Tillotson, Milton, Locke, Addison, Pope, Swift, and higher papers in the *Spectator* and *Guardian*, the best translations of Homer, Virgil, and Horace, and *Telemachus*, *Travels of Cyrus*, etc.

Once a year let there be public exercises in the hall, the trustees and citizens being present. Then let fine gilt books be given as prizes to such boys as distinguish themselves and excel the others

in any branch of learning, making three degrees of comparison ; giving the best prize to him that performs best, a less valuable one to him that comes up next to the best, and another to the third ; commendations, encouragement, and advice to the rest ; keeping up their hopes, that by industry they may excel another time. The names of those that obtain the prize to be yearly printed in a list.

The hours of each day are to be divided and disposed in such a manner as that some classes may be with the writing master, improving their hands ; others with the mathematical master, learning arithmetic, accounts, geography, use of the globes, drawing, mechanics, etc. ; while the rest are in the English school, under the English master's care.

Thus instructed, youth will come out of this school, fitted for learning any business, calling, or profession, except such wherein languages are required ; and, though unacquainted with any ancient or foreign tongue, they will be masters of their own, which is of more immediate and general use, and withal will have attained many other valuable accomplishments ; the time usually spent in acquiring those languages, often without success, being here employed in laying

such a foundation of knowledge and ability as, properly improved, may qualify them to pass through and execute the several offices of civil life, with advantage and reputation to themselves and country.

V

SPEECH IN THE CONVENTION

AT THE CONCLUSION OF ITS DELIBERATIONS

[This speech shows Franklin's characteristic modest diffidence, an air of doubt as to the validity of his own opinions and a feeling of assurance only in a superhuman guidance. He wanted unanimity in the vote to adopt the proposed Constitution of the United States, though several members, and himself one of them, did not favor some provisions of the draft. He admitted that he had many times changed his judgment and that he might do so again; he was willing to sacrifice his own opinions to the public good, and he urged others to do the same. The result was the passage of the motion to adopt by unanimous consent.]

MR. PRESIDENT: I confess that I do not entirely approve of this Constitution at present; but, Sir, I am not sure I shall never approve it; for, having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged, by better information or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise.

- It is therefore that, the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment of others. Most men, indeed, as well as most sects in religion, think themselves in possession of all truth, and that wherever others differ from them it is so far error. Steele, a Protestant, in a dedication, tells the Pope that the only difference between our two churches in their opinions of the certainty of their doctrines is, the Romish church is infallible, and the church of England is never in the wrong. But, though many private persons think almost as highly of their own infallibility as that of their sect, few express it so naturally as a certain French lady who, in a little dispute with her sister, said, "But I meet with nobody but myself that is always in the right." "Je trouve que moi qui aie toujours raison."

In these sentiments, Sir, I agree to this Constitution, with all its faults—if they are such; because I think a general government necessary for us, and there is no form of government but what may be a blessing to the people, if well administered; and I believe further that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people

shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other. I doubt, too, whether any other convention we can obtain may be able to make a better constitution; for when you assemble a number of men, to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does; and I think it will astonish our enemies, who are waiting with confidence to hear that our councils are confounded like those of the builders of Babel, and that our states are on the point of separation, only to meet hereafter for the purpose of cutting one another's throats. Thus I consent, Sir, to this Constitution, because I expect no better and because I am not sure that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its errors I sacrifice to the public good. I have never whispered a syllable of them abroad. Within these walls they were born and here they shall die. If every one of us, returning to our constituents, were to report the objections he has had to it

and endeavor to gain partisans in support of them, we might prevent its being generally received, and thereby lose all the salutary effects and great advantages resulting naturally in our favor among foreign nations, as well as among ourselves, from our real or apparent unanimity. Much of the strength and efficiency of any government in procuring and securing happiness to the people depends upon opinion, on the general opinion of the goodness of that government, as well as of the wisdom and integrity of its governors. I hope, therefore, for our own sakes, as a part of the people, and for the sake of our posterity, that we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this Constitution wherever our influence may extend, and turn our future thoughts and endeavors to the means of having it well administered.

On the whole, Sir, I cannot help expressing a wish that every member of the convention who may still have objections to it would with me on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility and, to make manifest our unanimity, put his name to this instrument.

[Then the motion was made for adding the last formula, viz., "Done in convention by the unanimous consent," etc., which was agreed to and added accordingly.]

VI

MOTION FOR PRAYERS IN THE CONVENTION

[This motion was made during the session of the convention that framed the Constitution of the United States. It shows Franklin's faith in the guiding hand of a divine Providence.]

MR. PRESIDENT : The small progress we have made, after four or five weeks' close attendance and continual reasonings with each other, our different sentiments on almost every question, several of the last producing as many noes as ayes, is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the human understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running all about in search of it. We have gone back to ancient history for models of government, and examined the different forms of those republics, which, having been originally formed with the seeds of their own dissolution, now no longer exist; and we have viewed modern states all

around Europe, but find none of their constitutions suitable to our circumstances.

In this situation of this assembly, groping, as it were, in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understandings? In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard; and they were graciously answered. All of us, who were engaged in the struggle, must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? or do we imagine we no longer need its assistance? I have lived, Sir, a long time; and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And, if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred

Writings, that, "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." I firmly believe this; and I also believe that, without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel; we shall be divided by our little, partial, local interests, our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to future ages. And, what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, and conquest.

I therefore beg leave to move,

That hereafter prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.

NOTE BY DR. FRANKLIN. — "The convention, except three or four persons, thought prayers unnecessary!"



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